

[Exercise Name]

Exercise Plan

[Date]

The Exercise Plan (ExPlan) gives senior leaders, observers, media personnel, and players from participating organizations information they need to observe or participate in the exercise. It includes an exercise overview, objectives and aligned capabilities, roles and responsibilities, logistics, schedule, and communications plan. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, controllers, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the ExPlan.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	[Insert the formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the document header]
Exercise Dates	[Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise]
Scope	This exercise is a [exercise type], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters].
Focus Area(s)	[Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery]
Capabilities	[List the capabilities being exercised]
Objectives	[List exercise objectives]
Threat/Hazard	[List the threat or hazard (e.g. natural/hurricane, technological/radiological release)]
Scenario	[Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts (2-3 sentences)]
Sponsor	[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]
Participating Organizations	[Insert a brief summary of the total number of participants and participation level (i.e., Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or international agencies). Consider including the full list of participating agencies in Appendix A.] [Delete Appendix A if not required.]
Point of Contact	[Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise POC (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor)]

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned capabilities are guided by senior leaders and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
[Insert objectives]	[Insert capability aligned to objective]
[Insert objectives]	[Insert capability aligned to objective]
[Insert objectives]	[Insert capability aligned to objective]
[Insert objectives]	[Insert capability aligned to objective]
[Insert objectives]	[Insert capability aligned to objective]

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Controllers.** Controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.
- **Simulators.** Simulators are control staff personnel who deliver scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise. They most often operate out of the Simulation Cell (SimCell), but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles (e.g., media reporters or next of kin) in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and Senior Controller.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established

capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

- **Actors.** Actors simulate specific roles during exercise play, typically victims or other bystanders. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
- **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.
- **Media Personnel.** Some media personnel may be present as observers, pending approval by the sponsor organization and the Exercise Planning Team. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
- **Support Staff.** The exercise support staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation.

Assumptions

Assumptions constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, as such, are assumed to be present before the exercise starts. The following assumptions apply to the exercise:

- [The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.]
- [The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.]
- [Exercise simulation contains sufficient detail to allow players to react to information and situations as they are presented as if the simulated incident were real.]
- [Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.]

Artificialities

During this exercise, the following artificialities apply:

- [Exercise communication and coordination is limited to participating exercise organizations, venues, and the SimCell.]
- [Only communication methods listed in the Communications Directory are available for players to use during the exercise.]

EXERCISE LOGISTICS

Safety

Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise events. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

- A Safety Controller is responsible for ensuring the exercise is conducted in a safe environment; any safety concerns must be immediately reported to the Safety Controller. The Safety Controller and Exercise Director will determine if a real-world emergency warrants a pause in exercise play and when exercise play can be resumed.
- For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase **["real-world emergency."]** The following procedures should be used in case of a real emergency during the exercise:
 - Anyone who observes a participant who is seriously ill or injured will immediately notify emergency services and the closest controller, and, within reason and training, render aid.
 - The controller aware of a real emergency will initiate the **["real-world emergency"]** broadcast and provide the Safety Controller, Lead Controller, and Exercise Director with the location of the emergency and resources needed, if any. The Lead Controller will notify the **[Control Cell or SimCell]** as soon as possible if a real emergency occurs.

Fire Safety **[delete section if not applicable]**

Standard fire and safety regulations relevant to the **[jurisdiction, venue, or organization]** will be followed during the exercise. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Emergency Medical Services **[delete section if not applicable]**

The sponsor organization will coordinate with local emergency medical services in the event of a real-world emergency. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Electrical and Generating Device Hazards **[delete section if not applicable]**

All applicable electrical and generating device safety requirements should be documented prior to the start of the exercise. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Weapons Policy **[delete section if not applicable]**

All participants will follow the relevant weapons policy for the exercising organization or exercise venue. **[Please see Appendix [X] for a detailed description of the weapons policy.]**

Site Access

Security

If entry control is required for the exercise venue(s), the sponsor organization is responsible for arranging appropriate security measures. To prevent interruption of the exercise, access to exercise sites and the [Control Cell and/or SimCell] is limited to exercise participants. Players should advise their venue's controller or evaluator of any unauthorized persons.

Media/Observer Coordination [delete section if not applicable]

Organizations with media personnel and/or observers attending the event should coordinate with the sponsor organization for access to the exercise site. Media/Observers are escorted to designated areas and accompanied by an exercise controller at all times. Identify a designated location for the media prior to the start of the exercise. Sponsor organization representatives and/or the observer controller may be present to explain exercise conduct and answer questions. Exercise participants should be advised of media and/or observer presence.

Exercise Identification [delete section if not applicable]

Exercise staff may be identified by badges, hats, and/or vests to clearly display exercise roles; additionally, uniform clothing may be worn to show agency affiliation. Table 2 describes these identification items.

Group	Color
Controllers	[White]
Evaluators	[Red]
Support Staff	[Green]
Players	[Blue]
Safety Controller	[Orange]
Observer	[Gray]
Media	[Purple]
Actors	[Yellow]
VIP	[Black]

Table 2. Exercise Identification

POST-EXERCISE ACTIVITIES

Debriefings

Post-exercise debriefings aim to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

Hotwash

At the conclusion of exercise play, a controller or evaluator will lead a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting. The information gathered during a hotwash contributes to the AAR/IP and any exercise suggestions can improve future exercises.

Participant Feedback Forms

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design, and to share their observed strengths and areas for improvement. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hot Wash.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

- Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.
- Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the control staff.
- All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement **["This is an exercise."]**
- Exercise players who place telephone calls or initiate radio communication with the SimCell must identify the organization or individual with whom they wish to speak.

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents.
- Be at the appropriate site at least 30 minutes before the exercise starts. Wear the appropriate uniform and/or identification item(s).
- Sign in when you arrive.
- If you gain knowledge of the scenario before the exercise, notify a controller so that appropriate actions can be taken to ensure a valid evaluation.
- **[Read your Exercise Information Handout if provided.]**

During the Exercise

- Respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.
- Controllers will give you only information they are specifically directed to disseminate. You are expected to obtain other necessary information through existing emergency information channels.
- Do not engage in personal conversations with controllers, evaluators, observers, or media personnel. If you are asked an exercise-related question, give a short, concise answer. If you are busy and cannot immediately respond, indicate that, but report back with an answer as soon as possible.
- If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, ask a controller.

- Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects. Every effort has been made by the exercise's trusted agents to balance realism with safety and to create an effective learning and evaluation environment.
- All exercise communications will begin and end with the statement ["This is an exercise."] This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.
- When you communicate with the SimCell, identify the organization or individual with whom you wish to speak.
- Speak when you take an action. This procedure will ensure that evaluators are aware of critical actions as they occur.
- Maintain a log of your activities. Many times, this log may include documentation of activities that were missed by a controller or evaluator.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the Hotwash at your venue with controllers and evaluators.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. Provide the completed form to a controller or evaluator.
- Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to your controller or evaluator for review and inclusion in the AAR.

Simulation Guidelines

Because the exercise is of limited duration and scope, certain details will be simulated. The physical description of what would fully occur at the incident sites and surrounding areas will be relayed to players by simulators or controllers. A SimCell will simulate the roles and interactions of nonparticipating organizations or individuals. [Include any additional simulations to be used in the exercise.]

APPENDIX A: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Controller Directory

Name	Agency	Location	Phone	Email
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]

Simulation Cell Directory

Name	Simulating Agency	Phone	Email
[Name]	[Agency]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Phone]	[Email]

Evaluator Directory

Name	Agency	Location	Phone	Email
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]
[Name]	[Agency]	[Location]	[Phone]	[Email]

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
Federal
[Federal Participant]
[Federal Participant]
[Federal Participant]
State
[State Participant]
[State Participant]
[State Participant]
[Jurisdiction A]
[Jurisdiction A Participant]
[Jurisdiction A Participant]
[Jurisdiction A Participant]
[Jurisdiction B]
[Jurisdiction B Participant]
[Jurisdiction B Participant]
[Jurisdiction B Participant]

APPENDIX C: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

[Note: Because this information is updated throughout the exercise planning process, appendices may be developed as stand-alone documents rather than part of the ExPlan.]

Day 1: [Date]	Personnel	Activity	Location
[Time]	Controllers, evaluators, and exercise staff	Controller and Evaluator Briefing	[Location]
As needed	Controllers and exercise staff	Set up control cell and walkthrough	[Location]

Day 2: [Date]	Personnel	Activity	Location
[Time]	Controllers and exercise staff	Check-in for final instructions and communications check	[Location]
[Time]	Media	Media Briefing	[Location]
[Time]	VIPs and selected exercise staff	VIP Controller Briefing	[Location]
[Time]	Controllers and evaluators	Controllers and evaluators in starting positions	[Location]
[Time]	All	Controllers provide player briefs	[Location]
[Time]	All	Exercise starts	[Location]
[Time]	All	Exercise ends	[Location]
Immediately Following the Exercise	All	Venue Hotwashes/turn in all Participant Feedback Forms	[Location]

Day 3: [Date]	Personnel	Activity	Location
[Time]	Controllers, evaluators, and elected and appointed officials	Controller and Evaluator After Action Review	[Location]

APPENDIX D: EXERCISE SITE MAPS

Figure D.1: [Map Title]

[Insert map]

Figure D.2: [Map Title]

[Insert map]

APPENDIX E: EXERCISE SCENARIO

[Insert the detailed exercise scenario narrative or scenario ground truth, including scenario information across all venues and functions. This should establish a common understanding of the scenario for all controllers and evaluators.]

Weather

[Insert weather for the exercise day(s) including if it is real weather or simulated.]

Major Events

[Venue Name]

- [Insert a list of major exercise events at each venue, including both simulated scenario events and important expected player actions.]
- [Insert event description.]
- [Insert event description.]

[Venue Name]

- [Insert a list of major exercise events at each venue, including both simulated scenario events and important expected player actions.]
- [Insert event description.]
- [Insert event description.]

[Venue Name]

- [Insert a list of major exercise events at each venue, including both simulated scenario events and important expected player actions.]
- [Insert event description.]
- [Insert event description.]

APPENDIX F: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
SME	Subject Matter Expert
[Acronym]	[Term]
[Acronym]	[Term]
[Acronym]	[Term]